

Poem For The Turn Of The Year

Though the lilac is past its bloom,
sometimes hummingbirds
alight there, each
an offering with its own melodic
color. When they depart, longing
follows them and
what is left of my heart (perhaps
only the nectar) darts away also
like the sudden thought of something
ruby-throated
and watching with its wings.
Stillness may be the left hand
of an execution or a monument
born among the lilies
with their burden of faded blossom.

Can everything really happen, even

when the fire is cold? The fox
gone over the hill? The lamp unlit
and nowhere to be found?
Is it true we are inaccurate maps
of ourselves, gardens
surprised and helpless before the mystery
of their own design?
The hour of my life is late. A first
cricket invokes the moon
across which the flocks are flying.
Such lonely unity, this starlit migration,
and under it the few remaining angels
gowned in bright leaves and swaying
like the rest of us
on their mortal stems.

Christopher Howell